

EMPLOYMENT REFERENCE GUIDE



**American
Dental
Hygienists'
Association**

"You have a higher purpose than making money in a business. If you have a higher purpose, you marshall all kinds of forces behind you and within you that support your goal. True success always involves personal fulfillment of some kind, and you are fulfilled only by working and living in harmony with your personal life."

Marc Allen

President and Co-Founder of
New World Library

**AMERICAN DENTAL
HYGIENISTS' ASSOCIATION**
Employment Reference Guide

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Originally, the Dental Hygiene Employment Reference Guide was prepared by Jane L. Forest, RDH, with a member of the Council on Dental Hygiene Practice of the American Dental Hygienists' Association in 1987. The purpose of this guide was to assist dental hygienists in preparing for employment interviews and obtaining optimal employment status.

Several changes and additions have been made to this guide as a result of a decision to update the material in the year 2008. As the American Dental Hygienists' Association is committed to remaining current with recommendations related to the marketability of the professional dental hygienist in today's fluctuating economy, updates have again been made in 2015 under the guidance of the New Professional Advisory Group, part of The ADHA New Professional Program, sponsored by Truly Radiant™ - an Arm & Hammer™ product.

The following information may be used by new graduates or experienced, licensed dental hygienists re-entering the profession of dental hygiene. Prepare for a new position in dental hygiene as if you were preparing for the job itself. Believe in yourself, pay attention to details and be selective.

WHERE TO BEGIN

Preparing to find a job, whatever stage in your career, can be exciting, overwhelming, and time-consuming. But, there are numerous resources and possibilities available for the dental hygienist, including, but not limited to:

- ◆ Professional Associations
- ◆ ADHA's Career Center
- ◆ Constituent/Component Placement Services
- ◆ Professional Staffing Services
- ◆ Job search websites: Monster.com, CareerBuilder.com, Indeed.com, SimplyHired.com
- ◆ LinkedIn
- ◆ Networking with Colleagues
- ◆ Educational Institutions
- ◆ Professional Publications
- ◆ Career Fairs
- ◆ Dental Supply Salespeople
- ◆ Hospital and Health System Human Resources Departments
- ◆ Dental Insurance Companies
- ◆ Health Departments

With the help of the following sections, you'll enhance your resume and cover letter writing skills, strengthen interviewing basics, and better understand networking. Most importantly, you'll focus on a vision while working towards goals defined only by you.



YOUR VISION, GOALS & COMMITMENT

“We do not leave ourselves at the door when we enter the workplace, or vice versa.”

In order to be truly happy in any job or profession, work life and personal life must work together harmoniously. Which means, before you can accept a position, you must first know exactly what you are looking for in your chosen profession. You must have a vision of what you want to accomplish, taking into account your personal life and how it will blend with professional decisions.

WHAT IS A VISION?

The first step in developing a vision is to determine what values are most important to you and decide how you want to incorporate them into your vision. Begin by answering questions about yourself and your future.

- ◆ What motivates you in your work?
- ◆ What types of individuals inspire your work and work ethic?
- ◆ How do you want to impact others – patients and co-workers?
- ◆ Where do you see your career in five years, 10 years or 15 years?

Once you have begun to answer these questions, you can begin a vision statement. A vision statement is a brief (no more than one or two sentences) statement about your personal vision as it relates to your career as a registered dental hygienist.

Your statement should draw upon your values, desire for your career and aspirations for the future. Having a vision statement will also help you make decisions going forward about job opportunities, career moves, volunteer opportunities and more. If something falls within the purview of your mission statement, it may well align with your goals. If not, you may want to consider that taking the potential opportunity may steer you in a direction other than your desired goals.



GOALS

Goal setting is generally defined as “establishing short or long term objectives, usually incorporating deadlines and quantifiable measures”. What short and long term objectives do you want to accomplish in your career as a registered dental hygienist? What personal objectives have you set? Where do you want to direct your effort? Setting goals will help you manage the time you have and guide you towards achieving your vision statement.

Your goals should be challenging, yet attainable. Following are some goal setting strategies that may prove effective in your quest to set goals in your professional career and personal life.

1. Consider the following questions when formulating your goals:
 - ◆ Are you willing to devote the time and energy necessary to achieve your goals?
 - ◆ Do you have the bandwidth to achieve your goals immediately, or might you need more time?
 - ◆ Are your goals realistic and attainable given what you know now?
 - ◆ Are your goals clearly stated, with little room for ambiguity?
 - ◆ Are you willing to revisit your goals on a yearly basis to make sure they are still relevant?
 - ◆ How will you know when you have reached your goals? Are they measurable?
 - ◆ Are your goals consistent with your vision, as stated above?
2. Write down your goals and deadlines for each. It's easier to think in smaller steps, with smaller timeframes.
3. Identify the benefits of achieving each goal.
4. Identify alternate routes for each goal should there be a hurdle along the way. Don't let a great goal get derailed by a plan that cannot be executed as imagined.
5. Create a timeline or action plan.
6. Commit to the plan.
7. Consider a reward system to help keep you on track.
8. Don't wait, take the first step toward attainment of your goal immediately.
9. Be flexible and nimble. There are creative solutions and ideas for most anything.

COMMIT YOURSELF

With a vision statement and a clearly defined set of attainable, measurable goals, you are ready to commit yourself and take command of your future! Be the architect of your own life and future by making a commitment toward achieving your vision and goals.



WHICH ROLE IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

The dental hygienist plays an integral role in assisting individuals and groups in achieving and maintaining optimal oral health. Dental hygienists provide educational, clinical, and consultative services to individuals and populations of all ages in a variety of settings and capacities. The professional roles of the dental hygienist include the following:

CLINICIAN

Dental hygienists in a clinical role assess, diagnose, plan, implement, evaluate and document treatment for prevention, intervention, and control of oral diseases, while practicing in collaboration with other health professionals. Educational requirement is an entry-level (associate or bachelor) degree.

Examples of clinical employment settings include:

- ◆ Private dental practices
- ◆ Community clinics
- ◆ Hospitals
- ◆ University dental clinics
- ◆ Prison facilities
- ◆ Nursing homes
- ◆ Schools

CORPORATE

Corporate dental hygienists are employed by companies that support the oral health industry through the sale of products and services. Leaders throughout the dental industry often employ dental hygienists due to their clinical experience and understanding of dental practice. Educational requirements vary. Some corporate dental hygienists may have an associate degree with 2 years of experience; however, a bachelor's degree is preferred.

Examples of corporate positions include:

- ◆ Sales Representatives
- ◆ Product Researchers
- ◆ Corporate Educators
- ◆ Corporate Administrators

RESEARCHER

Research conducted by dental hygienists can be either qualitative or quantitative. Quantitative research involves conducting surveys & analyzing the results, while qualitative research may involve testing a new procedure, product, or theory for accuracy, effectiveness, etc. Education requirement is a bachelor degree; however, a graduate or doctoral degree is preferred.

Examples of employment settings for dental hygienist researchers include:

- ◆ Colleges and universities
- ◆ Corporations
- ◆ Governmental agencies
- ◆ Nonprofit organizations

ADMINISTRATOR

Dental hygienists in administrative positions apply organizational skills, communicate objectives, identify and manage resources, and evaluate and modify programs of health, education and health care. Educational requirements vary by position; however, most require a graduate or doctoral degree.

Examples of administrative positions held by dental hygienists include:

- ◆ Clinical Director, statewide school sealant program
- ◆ Program Director, dental hygiene program
- ◆ Executive Director, state association staff
- ◆ Research Administrator, university
- ◆ Director, corporate sales

PUBLIC HEALTH

Community Health programs are typically funded by government or nonprofit organizations. These positions often offer an opportunity to provide care to those who otherwise would not have access to dental care. Educational requirements vary. As more community health programs emerge, the need for dental hygienists with advanced education and training is necessary. Typically these positions require a bachelor's degree.

Examples of positions for dental hygienists in public health settings include:

- ◆ Clinician
- ◆ Rural or inner city community clinics
- ◆ Indian Health Service
- ◆ Head Start programs
- ◆ School sealant programs
- ◆ Administrator
- ◆ State Public Health Officer
- ◆ Community Clinic Administrator

EDUCATOR

Dental Hygiene educators are in great demand. Colleges and universities throughout the U. S. require dental hygiene instructors who use educational theory and methodology to educate a cadre of competent oral health professionals. Corporations also employ educators who provide continuing education to licensed dental hygienists. Typical education requirements are listed below.

Examples of dental hygiene educators include:

- ◆ Clinical Instructors: May possess an associate or bachelor degree.
- ◆ Classroom Instructors: Must have a bachelor or graduate degree.
- ◆ Program Directors: Must have a graduate or doctoral degree.
- ◆ Corporate Educators: Education requirements vary by corporation.

ENTREPRENEUR

By using imagination and creativity to initiate or finance new commercial enterprises, dental hygienists have become successful entrepreneurs in a variety of businesses. Educational requirement is an entry-level (associate or bachelor) degree.

Some examples of business opportunities developed by dental hygienists include:

- ◆ Practice Management Company
- ◆ Product Development & Sales
- ◆ Employment Service
- ◆ CE Provider or Meeting Planner
- ◆ Consulting Business
- ◆ Founder of a Nonprofit
- ◆ Independent Clinical Practice
- ◆ Professional Speaker/Writer

YOUR RESUME & COVER LETTER

“Employers typically spend 60 seconds determining if your resume gets a second look or eliminated.”

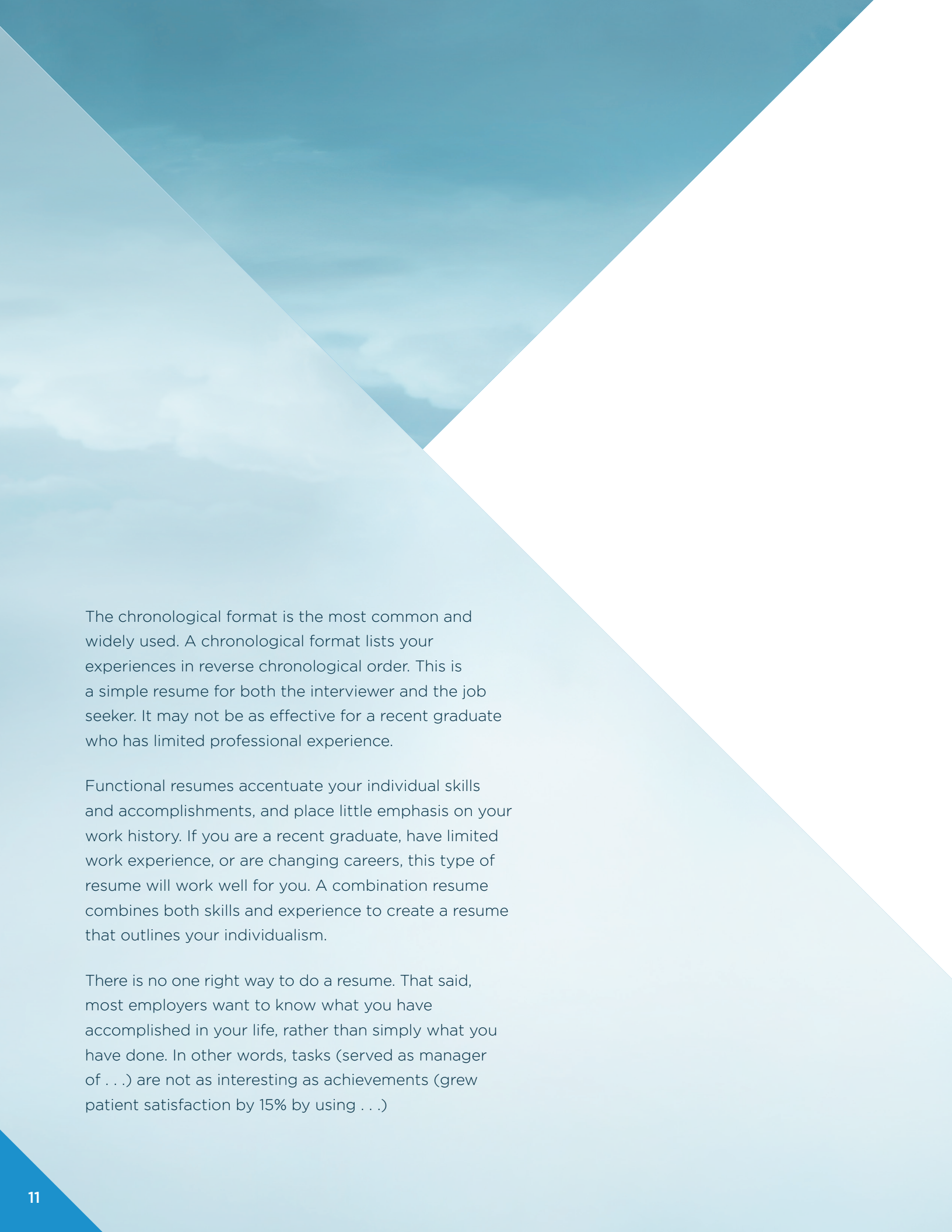
WHY DO I NEED A RESUME?

A resume is an advertisement of you. Typically, employers ask for a resume when you are applying for a position, EVEN IF you have completed all of this information online or on a job application in their office. If you don't have one, often times you will not be considered for the position. You know your education, skills, accomplishments and experience better than anyone else. Use that to your advantage and present yourself with confidence!

WHAT IS A RESUME?

A resume is a snapshot of you, your employment history, accomplishments, professional affiliations, community involvement, and education. Your resume must be effective in both substance and appearance.

Since the first impression you give a potential employer is through your resume, it must represent you in the best possible light. Think about your personal “brand”, the job you are seeking and the company, office or affiliation you are going after. All of these elements should be considered when developing both your resume and your cover letter. There are several acceptable formats of a resume: chronological, functional or a combination thereof. Oftentimes, the nature of the position you are applying for and the length of time you have worked will dictate the format you should follow.



The chronological format is the most common and widely used. A chronological format lists your experiences in reverse chronological order. This is a simple resume for both the interviewer and the job seeker. It may not be as effective for a recent graduate who has limited professional experience.

Functional resumes accentuate your individual skills and accomplishments, and place little emphasis on your work history. If you are a recent graduate, have limited work experience, or are changing careers, this type of resume will work well for you. A combination resume combines both skills and experience to create a resume that outlines your individualism.

There is no one right way to do a resume. That said, most employers want to know what you have accomplished in your life, rather than simply what you have done. In other words, tasks (served as manager of . . .) are not as interesting as achievements (grew patient satisfaction by 15% by using . . .)

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW WHEN WRITING A RESUME?

The most important thing that every resume writer must realize is that mistakes or false information in a resume often result in your resume being thrown out. You must proofread your resume for ALL errors. A potential employer may not notice if your punctuation or grammar is perfect, but they will notice if it is not.

Following are some basic resume guidelines to get you started:

- ◆ Keep your resume brief. If you are a recent graduate, try to limit your resume to one page. Those with significant professional experience should try to limit to two pages.
- ◆ First impressions are key! Make sure your resume is professional and easy for the reader to scan.
- ◆ At the very minimum, include your contact information, education and professional experience.
- ◆ Avoid including personal information. This includes marital status, age, race, religion, dependent children, health, and national origin.
- ◆ Know your audience. A resume for a clinical position will vary from an educational opportunity. You may need more than one resume, which is very easy to accomplish electronically with some relatively simple editing.
- ◆ Use action words! Try using action words that stress your accomplishments, leadership activities, passion areas and other achievements. If you graduated with honors, document it. If you increased production by 10%, document it. If you were your class president, document it!
- ◆ While some still print a resume, is it infrequent that employers are seeking printed resumes. That said, have a small quantity on hand for face-to-face meetings, to bring along on an interview, etc. You will likely be submitting your resume electronically when you make the initial application.
- ◆ When you do print, use quality paper and a decent printer. Think about the professional brand and demeanor you want to express.
- ◆ You are the expert on you! Write your resume by yourself. However, once you are comfortable with your resume, have colleagues and friends review it for any errors and/or suggestions. Recent graduates may want to contact their educational institution's career counselor for advice.

SAMPLE RESUME:

Emily Smith, RDH
123 Main Street
Chicago, IL 60613
(630)-555-5555
EmilySmith@gmail.com

OBJECTIVE

To obtain a position as a dental hygienist in a friendly dental office where patient care is the top priority.

SKILLS AND PROFICIENCIES

- ◆ Review and document health history, noting any possible contraindications to dental treatment.
- ◆ Expose diagnostic digital dental radiographs.
- ◆ Complete intra/extra-oral exam and periodontal evaluation.
- ◆ Perform oral prophylaxis, root planing, and soft tissue management.
- ◆ Utilize magnetostrictive and piezo ultrasonic scalers and hand instruments.
- ◆ Administration of local anesthesia and nitrous oxide-oxygen sedation.
- ◆ Perform whitening procedures, including fabrication of custom whitening trays.
- ◆ Apply cavity prevention agents such as fluoride and sealants.
- ◆ Demonstrate oral hygiene techniques, specific for each patient to achieve optimal oral health.
- ◆ Educate patients on risks of oral diseases and benefits of preventive care.
- ◆ Set up re-care appointments using Dentrix, Eagle Soft and XL Dent software systems.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Dental Temps, Inc. – Chicago, IL | 2014-Present

- ◆ Active Dental Hygienist on a temporary basis for various dental practices in the Chicago-land area

EDUCATION

College of DuPage – Glen Ellyn, IL | 2011-2013

- ◆ Associate of Applied Sciences in Dental Hygiene

HONORS, AWARDS AND LEADERSHIP

- ◆ Dental Hygiene Class President | 2012-2013
- ◆ Exceptional Student Award | 2012

PROFESSIONAL LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS

- ◆ CPR certification | 2011-Present
- ◆ National Dental Hygiene Board Examination Certificate | 2013
- ◆ State of Illinois Dental Hygiene License #84367 | 2013-Present
- ◆ Member of Illinois Dental Hygienists' Association | 2013-Present

REFERENCES

Available upon request

WHAT SHOULD I INCLUDE ON MY RESUME?

Contact info

Include your name, address, phone and email address. Do not use a nickname and do not abbreviate words such as Street, Avenue, etc. Remember that every word needs to portray a professional image! Include your telephone number, including your area code, and your email address should appear after your address. Employers are more likely to email than to send a letter or even phone you. Be sure you check your email frequently during a job search to allow you to respond quickly.

Objective

If you choose to include a career objective on your resume, it should follow your contact information. This is a brief synopsis of what you are seeking in a position. This is completely customizable and should be edited based on the position for which you are applying. Be clear and concise on what you can offer employers.

Education

Your education and training is essential to a resume. If you are a recent graduate and don't have much work experience, you will want to highlight this section. Recent graduates should put their educational credentials towards the top of the resume since this is representative of recent endeavors. Do not mention high school as it is irrelevant and assumed. Be sure to list any academic awards and achievements, including the Dean's List. Any professional affiliations as a student, such as a student member of ADHA will be desirable to an employer and should also be highlighted.

WHAT SHOULD I INCLUDE ON MY RESUME? (con't)

Skills and Accomplishments

Your skills and accomplishments should always appear on your resume. Consider the job you are applying for to help determine which skills you want to include. Outline your skills that are essential to the job. For example: if you are applying for a hygiene position in a periodontist office and you have volunteered your time at a children's summer camp, this is an essential piece of information that you want to include on your resume. Your experience working with small children will be essential should you be considered for the position. And if you have measurable accomplishments that can be articulated on a resume, they should absolutely be included and highlighted. This might be "reduced patient _____ by _____%" or "helped to increase _____ by _____%".

Experience

Always list your experience. If you have been a dental hygienist for ten years at three separate offices, include all of this information. Include your job responsibilities, your accomplishments and how you impacted that office. For example: if you accepted the challenge of ordering all office dental materials, and you saved 15% by buying in bulk, capture that on your resume. If you have certifications, have won awards, authored articles or been published, write it down. If you are a member of any professional associations, document it. If you sit on the board at your local community outreach center, include it. Leadership activities convey a professional, well-rounded individual willing to put forth the extra effort. Don't hesitate to include this information on your resume!

References

References should be listed on a separate page with the same formatting as your resume. Always be prepared to provide a list of references at the interview. Potential employers will want to phone your references to get a better idea of who you are and how you may fit into the role in which you interviewed. Be sure to contact your references prior to the interview to ensure they are comfortable recommending you for the position, and again if you feel a phone call to them is imminent. It helps anyone recommending you to know as much as possible about the position, and what you feel are the best areas for emphasis.

SAMPLE PROFESSIONAL REFERENCE LIST:

Emily Smith, RDH
123 Main Street
Chicago, IL 60613
(952)-555-5555
EmilySmith@gmail.com

Professional References

Dr. Mary Thomas, D.D.S.

Company
123 Any Lane
City, State ZIP Code
Phone number
Email address

Tom Andrews

Professor
State University
Campus Address
City, State ZIP Code
Phone number
Email address

Larry Rogers, D.D.S.

Clinic Name
Office Address
City, State ZIP Code
Phone number
Email address

SAMPLE COVER LETTER:

Emily Smith, RDH
123 Main Street
Chicago, IL 60613
(952)-555-5555
EmilySmith@gmail.com

Dr. John Johnson, D.D.S.
456 Center Ave,
Suite #789
Chicago, IL 60611

Dear Dr. Johnson,

I am a Registered Dental Hygienist and am interested in the dental hygienist position that was advertised on the ADHA Job Board.

I am a graduate from the College of DuPage dental hygiene program. Since graduation, I have primarily worked as a temporary dental hygienist for Dental Temps, Inc., in Chicago, Illinois. This has given me immediate experience in a variety of dental offices. I have worked for some of the top dentists in Chicago, and have treated a wide variety of patients of all ages and health needs.

My dental hygiene regimen can be tailored so that it's in line with a particular dental office's best practices. I am skilled in oral prophylaxis, root planing and soft tissue management. I am also experienced in exposing diagnostic radiographs, updating medical histories and periodontal charting. Educating and motivating patients to achieve optimal oral health is one of my passions.

I am confident that my RDH knowledge and background in dental hygiene is what your dental office is seeking for this position. My enclosed resume has further details for you to review. I look forward to having the opportunity to discuss, in person, your dental hygienist needs in the future.

Sincerely,

Emily Smith

Emily Smith, RDH

Resume enclosed



WHAT SHOULD I PUT IN MY COVER LETTER?

Should you be able to submit a cover letter, you should begin with a brief introduction of yourself, create a bridge between your skills and the employer's needs, and ask for an interview.

In your cover letter, you should acknowledge that you are applying for the advertised position, tell the reader why you are a good candidate for the position, support your resume and ask for an interview. All of this can be accomplished in a few short paragraphs.

Always address your cover letter to a specific individual, if at all possible. With online application systems, this can be difficult and a name may not be identified. However, when possible, determine who the hiring manager is for the position and address your cover letter to him/her. If you are applying for a faculty position at your local dental hygiene school, you do not want to address your letter to Program Director. Instead, you will want to address your cover letter to Dr. Ann Smith, RDH, MS, EdD, Program Director, State School, Dental Hygiene Program, City, State and ZIP Code.

If you are an experienced dental hygienist, briefly explain how your experience can benefit the organization. If you are a recent graduate, or have little experience, emphasize activities that show initiative, leadership, and a strong work ethic. Ask for the opportunity to interview for the position. Let the employer know how to reach you.

End your letter with a professional closure, such as 'sincerely', or 'regards'. Always remember to edit your cover letter and resume until they say exactly what you want them to say. Have a colleague or friend review them to ensure that you have expressed your message in a clear, concise, and professional manner.

JOB HUNTING

*“A job search can feel like a full-time job.
To some extent, it should be.”*

While you're in job search mode, you should be harnessing as much energy and as many resources as possible to the job search. If you are already employed, that means devoting a certain amount of time to the search every day, and more on your days off. If you are unemployed, the job search should serve as your full-time job until you find the position you want and accept the offer. In order to do anything well, focus is needed. A job search takes tremendous focus. That focus should be on the kind of job setting you are seeking, your own assessment of your skills and talents and a good match between the two. Anything worth doing is worth time, energy and focus. Considering how many hours, days, weeks, months and years we spend working, focus on the job search is critical.

There are many options for finding and applying for jobs. These include:

- ◆ Online job boards (CareerBuilder, Monster, Simply Hired and more).
- ◆ A proactive search of dental practices and/or other organizations for which you would like to work.
- ◆ Discussion with family and friends. While in job search mode, you should be talking to as many people as possible about your job search and what you are looking for in a position. You never know what leads may come from those you know (and it happens all the time)!
- ◆ Your academic program. Staying in touch with your academic program and/or searching its job board are excellent ways to find jobs.
- ◆ Reaching out to alumni of your program. Alums tend to want to hire and recommend other graduates of the same program. Your alumni group can be an excellent source of job leads and recommendations.

In other words, everything is “on the table” and possible. This is great news, but also requires more creativity and assertiveness than ever before to find that great position.

WHY NETWORKING MATTERS

“In 2015 and beyond, networking is critical to the success of your career advancement, and continued professional development.”

WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Some think it is finding the ballroom at an annual convention and shaking a few hands. Others know it is much more than that. Networking is not a “nice to have” but something that you should consider essential to the viability of your career long-term.

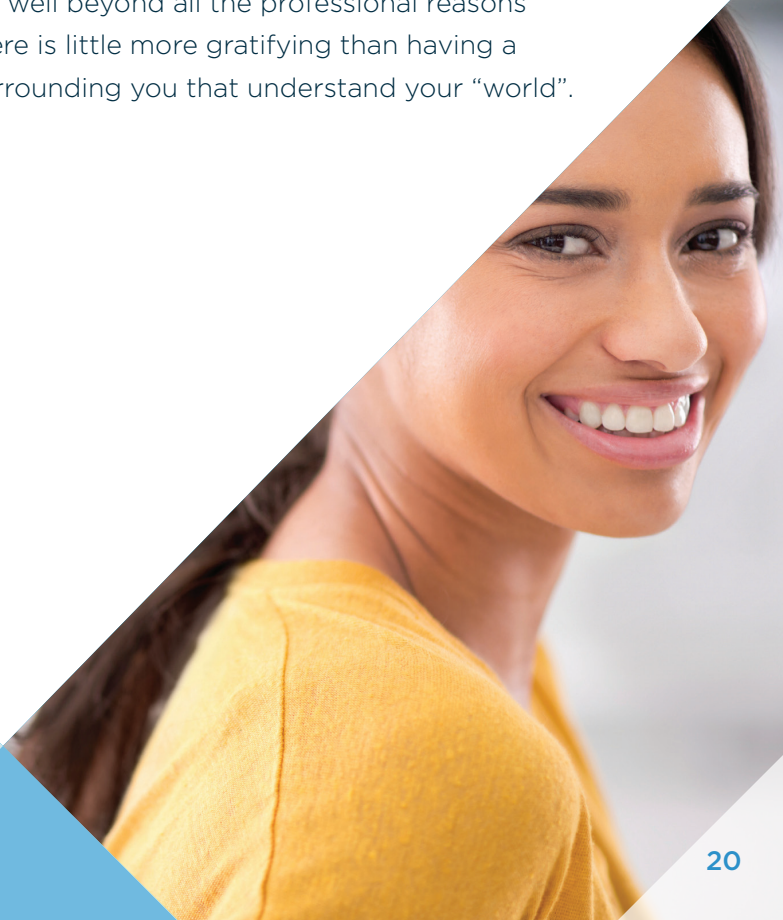
NETWORKING SHOULD HAPPEN EACH AND EVERY DAY OF YOUR CAREER.

You should always be thinking about building your network. This is something much more than accumulating Facebook friends or LinkedIn connections, but making contact with individuals that you know or want to know for professional purposes.

Most well-connected individuals know that having a large circle of industry contacts not only enriches one’s career, but also serves as an insurance policy. It’s something you can “call up” when you need it, or during more difficult times. You do not want to start building your network when you need it. You want to have a network in place should you need it, at any time, and for any reason. But well beyond all the professional reasons for connecting with industry colleagues, there is little more gratifying than having a profession you love and so many friends surrounding you that understand your “world”.

GREAT WAYS TO NETWORK:

- ◆ LinkedIn
- ◆ Facebook (keep it professional if you plan to use it for business networking)
- ◆ Industry list services
- ◆ Friends
- ◆ Friends of friends



INTERVIEW DO'S & DON'TS

DON'T BE AFRAID TO MARKET YOURSELF.

You know what you want and what you have to offer. But remember, it takes practice to become a skilled interviewee. So prepare for the interview and be confident that you can obtain the position you want.

Once you have scheduled an interview time, ask who will be conducting the interview and confirm the location of the interview. In some cases, it may be more than one individual, or a team of interviewers. Sometimes the interview is in an office or a boardroom, sometimes over lunch.

Think about the nuances of the interview scenario. An interview over lunch will likely involve more small talk than an interview conducted in an office. Whatever scenario you will find yourself in, do some research on the individuals you are meeting with. Know their positions within the organization, how long they have been there and anything you can find out about their background, educational or otherwise. Stumped for conversation over a lunch interview? Ask questions of them. What brought them to the field of dentistry? What was unique about the school they went to? People love to talk about themselves, and asking questions makes you look interested and intellectually curious.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW?

The interview should focus on the responsibilities of the job, your skills, and your experience.

The interview is two-fold, allowing the potential employer to interview you and determine if you are a good candidate for the job; and allowing you to interview the potential employer, determining whether you believe the job to be a good fit for you.

To make the interview a success, effective communication is essential. Be prepared to ask questions and clarify needs and expectations. Direct questions will provide you with surface details; open-ended questions will give a broader picture of the position as well as the office atmosphere.

WHEN PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW, FOLLOWING ARE SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ◆ Know the exact place and time of the interview as well as the correct pronunciation and name of the interviewer
- ◆ Research the company/office – if possible, investigate present employees' length of employment and the turnover rate
- ◆ Practice your interviewing skills
- ◆ Stay away from personal issues as much as possible. Avoid polarizing issues such as religion, politics and other topics that might create a difficult conversation.
- ◆ Prepare questions to ask during the interview. Having no questions shows an interviewer that you have not done your homework, nor are interested enough in the employer to want to know more.
- ◆ Dress in a conservative, professional manner
- ◆ Greet your interviewer with direct eye contact, a firm handshake, and a smile

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR INTERVIEW STYLE

First impressions are usually made within the first thirty seconds of meeting someone! Make sure that your interview look shows that you are polished and professional by keeping these do's and don'ts in mind:

- ◆ DO wear a skirt or pants suit; it should be simple and classic in a neutral color, such as black, brown, navy or tan.
- ◆ DO make sure the fit is comfortable and flattering.
- ◆ DO wear a conservative shirt or blouse underneath your suit.
- ◆ DO keep your make-up and jewelry understated and natural.
- ◆ DO wear comfortable shoes that you can walk in. Basic pumps with a closed toe are timeless.
- ◆ DO make sure your hair is clean and neat.
- ◆ DON'T wear anything low cut or too short!
- ◆ DON'T wear flashy, bright colors – you don't want to distract your interviewer!
- ◆ DON'T wear something that you could also wear on a date or out to the clubs!

AT THE INTERVIEW

Find out what the employer is looking for in this position and how the registered dental hygienist's role is perceived. Specifically, determine the scope of practice and the expectations. Try to establish a quick rapport with the interviewer. Pay special attention to the behavior and speech patterns as well as the individual's values. This will create a more hospitable environment for the interviewer as well as the interviewee. Remember that non-verbal communication is just as important as the verbal communication! Be aware of the tones of the conversation and facial expressions.

DO

- ◆ Arrive 10-15 minutes early. A late arrival is never excusable.
- ◆ Be prepared to complete a formal job application. Have contact information for previous employers, a pen handy, and write neatly. Fill out the application completely.
- ◆ Be genuinely glad to meet your interviewer. Greet her/him by formal name (Dr. Smith, etc.), stand up straight and walk with energy.
- ◆ Wait to be offered a chair before sitting down.
- ◆ Be a good listener, as well as a communicator. Be aware of nonverbal communication.
- ◆ Take notes of what you discuss and what questions arise as the interview progresses.
- ◆ Look your interviewer in the eye when speaking and listening.
- ◆ Get a complete description of the job and expected duties so you can apply your skills to the position.
- ◆ Stress your achievements in a factual, sincere manner.
- ◆ Show enthusiasm. Positive feedback from you may determine if you get a second interview or the job.
- ◆ Bring multiple copies of your resume as well as copies of your reference page.

DON'T

- ◆ Discuss marital status, age, race, religion, dependants, health or national origin.
- ◆ Lie or exaggerate your experience or accomplishments.
- ◆ Answer questions with simple one-word answers. Elaborate when possible.
- ◆ Chew gum.
- ◆ Speak poorly of former or current employers. When asked why you left your previous job, limit your comments to those necessary to communicate your reasons.

WHAT KINDS OF QUESTIONS WILL THEY ASK YOU?

You can be prepared to answer some of the more common interview questions such as:

- ◆ Tell me about yourself
- ◆ Tell me about your background
- ◆ What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
- ◆ Why did you choose a career as a dental hygienist?
- ◆ Tell me about your accomplishments
- ◆ Tell me about your strengths.
- ◆ Tell me about your weaknesses
- ◆ How do you stay current on professional issues?
- ◆ What interests you about this position?
- ◆ Tell me about your favorite or least favorite boss.
- ◆ How would you handle a medical emergency?
- ◆ How do you handle patients with anxiety?
- ◆ Pretend I am a patient that needs an extensive treatment plan including periodontal surgery followed by a rigorous soft tissue management program. How would you explain this extensive, costly, and often frightening treatment plan?

WHAT DO EMPLOYERS REALLY WANT TO KNOW?

A big part of what employers are looking for these days is less your technical expertise (that is assumed) and more your cultural fit within the work environment. Every company, practice, organization or educational institution has its own unique culture. You may acclimate easily and happily to one culture and not another, although many elements of the job might be very much the same.

There are some rather universal qualities that employers are typically looking for in a new employee. Emphasizing these areas will rarely steer you wrong:

- ◆ Adaptability
- ◆ Competence
- ◆ Good judgment
- ◆ Dependability
- ◆ Resourcefulness
- ◆ Enthusiasm
- ◆ Positive attitude

THE FIRST INTERVIEW

Employers liked to be asked questions. Oftentimes, a lack of questions is mistaken for a lack of interest. The majority of the questions listed below may be addressed by the interviewee during the interview. However, if these aren't addressed, do not be afraid to ask your questions!

- ◆ Where would I focus my efforts in the first several weeks on the job?
- ◆ What would I be expected to accomplish in this position?
- ◆ What are the greatest challenges of this position?
- ◆ What is your philosophy of care?
- ◆ How would you describe the office/company culture?
- ◆ What types of equipment supplies are available?
- ◆ What are the instrument provisions for the dental hygienist?
- ◆ What are the practiced procedures for infection control in the office?
- ◆ How many patients is the hygienist expected to see and what procedures are expected?
- ◆ How much time is scheduled for each patient?
- ◆ Are specific instruments or techniques on home care instruction expected?
- ◆ Are there any objections to doing things other than established procedure?
- ◆ How much time is allowed for certain procedures such as a prophylaxis, scaling and root planing per quadrant?
- ◆ When will the dentist examine the patients and how should the dental hygienist's findings be presented?



THE FIRST INTERVIEW (con't)

It is advisable not to focus too much on financial issues, vacation days and sick leave on the first interview. Assuming there will be a follow-up interview, that is the time to address those questions. While there are many schools of thought on this, many employers have their antennae up for interviewees that are more focused on money and time off than they are on the critical elements of the job. Should the topic come up during the first interview, be prepared to answer what you are looking for in terms of salary and benefits. Otherwise, tread lightly and plan to address those issues in the second interview.

THE SECOND INTERVIEW

Once you are asked back for a second interview, it is easy to assume that the organization is interested in you. While there may be another interview beyond the second, if you have made it this far it is a positive sign. Now is the time to explore all facets of the job, including pay and benefits, more deeply.

There are many possible questions listed here. It is not recommended that you run down this entire list with employers. Rather, pick and choose those elements that are most important to you and ask those questions. Get enough information to know if you want to pursue the opportunity further, and move on from there. Should you actually receive a job offer, you will be able to ask all pertinent additional information at that time, if it is not clarified through the offer letter itself.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

- ◆ What is the salary range for the position? How flexible is the range?
- ◆ What is the average pay increase for employees each year?
- ◆ What are the employee benefits and when is one eligible to receive them?
- ◆ Is health insurance available? Find out what the deductible and coinsurance payments will be. Will the costs associated with the insurance be deducted from the paycheck?
- ◆ Do employees receive paid sick days?
- ◆ Is disability or liability insurance provided?
- ◆ Are retirement or profit sharing plans available?

BONUS SYSTEM

- ◆ Is there a bonus structure in place? If so, how is it structured?
- ◆ Are there incentives for bringing in new patients or receiving positive performance evaluations?

PAID VACATION

- ◆ How many days of vacation are paid each year?
- ◆ Can vacation time be accumulated and carried forward to the following year?
- ◆ How far in advance must one arrange for vacation?
- ◆ Are there limitations as to when you can take your vacation time? Are vacations limited to the dentist's schedule?

CHANGE IN OFFICE HOURS

- ◆ How will you be compensated if your normal work hours conflict with a permanent change in office hours? (i.e. summer schedule, doctor's vacation)
- ◆ Will you be paid or forced to find a part-time position if the office hours change?
- ◆ Will you collect unemployment?
- ◆ How far in advance will you be notified of permanent changes in the office hours?
- ◆ Determine how last minute cancellations will affect your schedule and salary.
- ◆ Holidays
- ◆ Are you paid for holidays in which the office is closed?

CONTINUING EDUCATION

- ◆ Know the state continuing education requirements and practice act.
- ◆ Is there an employer assistance program available to cover costs associated with continuing education classes?
- ◆ Are employees paid for time they are attending the continuing education course?



NEGATIVE FACTORS

Your resume may be spotless, your experience outstanding. However, if you give off negative vibes, the interview may be over, and you will not get the job.

Stay away from such negatives as:

- ◆ Appearance that is not neat and professional
- ◆ Overbearing or aggressive behavior
- ◆ Lack of interest or enthusiasm
- ◆ Lack of confidence in yourself
- ◆ Lack of tact, courtesy, or maturity
- ◆ Speaking poorly of others
- ◆ Inability to maintain conversation
- ◆ Failure to ask questions
- ◆ Lack of preparation for the interview

FOLLOW UP

If you are interested in the position, do not be afraid to let the employer know. Make a job offer easy! Conclude the interview with a positive statement by saying, “Mr. /Ms. Smith, It was a pleasure meeting with you today. I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.” Or, you might say “I am very interested in working here. I think I would be a valuable asset to your team. I look forward to hearing back.” Don’t leave it up to the interviewer to question whether or not you are truly interested in the position.

THANK YOU NOTE

Follow up with a handwritten, personalized note thanking the potential employer for his/her time and restating your interest in the position. Even in this digital age (or maybe especially in this digital age), a handwritten thank you note stands apart. It remains a solid practice and is recommended after the interview. One savvy interviewer reports that she keeps thank you notes in her car, writes them immediately after the interview, and puts them in the nearest mailbox to the office. Imagine the pleasant surprise of the individual with whom you are interviewing when they receive your note the very next day.

ALTERNATIVE INTERVIEWING PROCESS

Working interviews are becoming progressively popular. They can range anywhere from one day to a few weeks and the dental hygienist is compensated for these services. This is not always at the request of the prospective employer but often at the request of the prospective employee.

SAMPLE THANK YOU NOTE:

Date

Name

Title

Address

City/State/ZIP

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms. Last Name:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me yesterday regarding the dental hygiene position. I enjoyed learning more about your office and appreciate the time you and the members of your team spent with me.

I am excited about the opportunity to work in an office committed to patient-centered care. I am confident and ready to share my professional and community service experience and knowledge with your patients. I would fit in well with your team-oriented approach and be an asset to your staff.

It was a pleasure to meet with you, and I appreciate your continued consideration for this exciting position. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Regards,

Signature

Your Name, RDH

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTING & REFERENCES

What is independent contracting?

According to ADHA's Employee Rights Handbook for Dental Hygienists an independent contractor is an individual that is recognized by the law as self-employed. This is not an arrangement an employer and employee can make on their own accord. There are many factors to consider as well as state and federal guidelines which must be followed.

To learn more, visit the IRS website.

PROS

- ◆ Pay scale may be higher
- ◆ Gets your foot in the door for many offices who could be looking to fill positions
- ◆ Gives you an opportunity to see if the office would be a consideration for employment in the future.

CONS

- ◆ No benefits (health insurance, 401K, etc.)
- ◆ Typically require a great deal of flexibility. ADHA strongly recommends that ALL RDH's have adequate liability insurance in any working arrangement.

Registered dental hygienists interested in pursuing an independent contract arrangement may find the following references useful. Prior to proceeding, however, ADHA encourages you to check state and federal laws before entering into any agreements and consult with an attorney as well as an accountant.

REFERENCES

- 1) American Dental Hygienists' Association: Employee Rights Handbook for Dental Hygienists, 1993.
- 2) Internal Revenue Service: Publication 539
- 3) Internal Revenue Service: American Consulting Corp. v. United States, 454 F.2d 473, 477 (3rd Cir. 1971); Revenue Ruling 87-41, 1987-1 C.B. 296
- 4) Internal Revenue Service: Revenue Act of 1978

MOVING?

Here's what you need to know about getting a license in your new state:

Most states have some provision for dental hygienists already licensed in another state to obtain a license without retaking the clinical examination. It may be called licensure by endorsement, licensure by credentials—or rarely—reciprocity.

The basic requirements will be:

- ◆ An active license in good standing.
- ◆ Almost always recent practice experience, although requirements for time in practice varies by state.
- ◆ Successful completion of the national board written exam.
- ◆ Successful completion of a clinical licensure exam – some states accept any clinical, while others only accept certain regional examinations.
- ◆ Graduation from a CODA-accredited dental hygiene program.

If you are a newer graduate without enough practice to qualify for licensure by endorsement, you still may be able to submit newer scores from a clinical exam you have taken and apply for licensure by examination using that score.

Some other possibilities to check into if the state does not have licensure by credentials available for you:

- ◆ The state may have temporary licensure to enable practice until the next time an exam is given.
- ◆ The state may have a special license if you agree to practice in certain public health/difficult access facilities.
- ◆ Practice is permitted with ANY valid license in federal facilities—like Indian Health Service clinics or military bases.

There is no such thing as automatic “reciprocity” among states which use the same clinical exam. You always need to apply for a license in the new state.

Depending on the state, there may be additional criteria to meet such as:

- ◆ Passing a state jurisprudence exam.
- ◆ Undergoing a professional background check. (Note: A background check may be performed by an independent agency and be a cost in addition to the application fee.)
- ◆ Letters of recommendation.
- ◆ Board interview.
- ◆ Qualification in an expanded function, such as local anesthesia.
- ◆ CPR certification or CE credits that correspond to what the new state requires.

For general information about how to obtain a license to practice in another state without retaking a clinical exam, please see the State Licensure by Credentials/Endorsement Chart. It provides basic information on fees, examinations, and previous practice requirements states use in order to grant licensure by credential/endorsement.

Not all states offer licensure by credential/endorsement and not all dental hygienists interested in relocating meet the practice and other requirements necessary to obtain licensure by credential/endorsement.

Typically, states provide an easy to access webpage on dental hygiene licensure where you can see specific rules and often download an application. For additional information and to confirm the requirements for licensure, please reach out to the State’s Board of Dental Examiners in which you want to practice.

Please see our resource document related to Overview of Clinical Examinations for exams needed: http://www.adha.org/resources-docs/7313_Overview_Clinical_Examinations.pdf. If you have more questions or need assistance contacting a state board, email Governmental Affairs at gov.affairs@adha.net or call 312-440-8925.

YOU GOT THE JOB. NOW WHAT?

How do you continue or even increase your professionalism once on the job?

Self-awareness

There is an old saying “Leader, know thyself”. This is one of the basic tenants of anyone successfully navigating a leadership position. Whether you will be an anointed leader, by virtue of your position on the staff team, or an informal leader (that exist everywhere each and every day) becoming a self-aware professional is vital to your ongoing success. Knowing yourself means understanding your strengths, blind spots, knowing how others see you and your actions, and understanding how to communicate best with others.

Attitude

Attitude is reflected in everything you do. Having a positive view of the work, workday, team and patient population will help you gain great strides. Rise above office gossip and politics, stay optimistic and look for areas that can be changed or innovated further to help the goals of the practice, organization or institution. And above all, stay professionally active and commit to being a lifelong learner. By continuing to learn, you will continue to grow.

